

Goessel, Kathryn M -FS

From: Dunlap, Karen E -FS on behalf of FS-comments-intermtn-salmon-challis-salmon-cobalt
Sent: Friday, April 27, 2012 2:51 PM
To: Goessel, Kathryn M -FS
Subject: FW: Panther (Big Creek) Geothermal Leasing Project

For your record. If you have more detailed information on the proposal it might be good to pass it along to Mr. Wagenknecht.
karen

From: bob wagenknecht [<mailto:alferdepacker@gmail.com>]
Sent: Thursday, April 26, 2012 5:59 PM
To: FS-comments-intermtn-salmon-challis-salmon-cobalt
Subject: Panther (Big Creek) Geothermal Leasing Project

Panther (Big Creek) Geothermal Leasing Project

Although I tried several times, I wasn't able to reach anyone for more information on this ill-advised scheme. However, someone who had told me that it's the result of a directive come down from the BLM's Washington Office to evaluate all possible/potential geothermal lease sites, and that's all the farther this thing has gone; and that there has not been an application to lease this specific site. Yet. So far. I hope.

It seems to me that Panther Hot Springs is an impractical prospect for a commercial or industrial lease of any kind. It's remote, and the country is extremely rugged and steeper than a cat's face. I believe it's far from any existing heavy-duty power line, substation, or any other such necessary infrastructure; and it's far from any significant number of potential customers for any power that may be produced. The hot spring is high above the creek, some 4 miles up the creek from the river -- via a narrow road -- and then another ~4 miles up a VERY steep and narrow one-way road to the hot spring itself.

Panther Creek Hot Springs is typical of just about all the hot springs sites I know of in Central Idaho. Although there are quite a few (relatively) hot springs in and around the batholith, almost all are either in the Sawtooth NRA -- and I assume (hope) off limits to such development -- or in as rugged and remote settings as Panther Creek, and therefore impractical for such commercial or industrial development, for the reasons stated above.

Furthermore, while I don't pretend to have any expertise on the subject, I question if ANY of these hot springs have either the water volume or high enough temperatures to be viable for such uses.

In addition to the impracticalities of commercial/industrial development of these resources, more important, in my mind, are the educational and recreational opportunities that would be lost by any such development. As a former forest service employee and the spouse of a FS retiree, I know that commercial development almost always takes precedence over preservation or recreation use, so I expect that if Panther -- or any other -- Hot Spring is proposed for destruction by commercial tapping, that the Forest Service and BLM will bend over backward to accommodate it; so the best we could hope for is some -- probably minimal -- efforts at mitigation. Therefore, any mitigation for any such development (not just at Panther, but any hot spring) must include, AS A BARE MINIMUM, (1) stipulations that any drilling, tapping, and infrastructure development and construction must be COMPLETELY out of sight and out of hearing range of the existing spring(s); and (2) before development takes place, studies must be made to insure that neither the water volume nor temperature are adversely affected by the development; (3) that those studies and tests be peer reviewed by an independent third party; and (4) if it's found that the water temperature, volume or other water qualities would be adversely impacted, the permit/lease would be cancelled, and (5) all access roads, drill pads and holes, and other related

disturbances would be restored to their original grade and (6) revegetated with appropriate native vegetation, similar to what was in place before disturbance.

Please advise me beforehand of all meetings and hearings regarding this proposal, and provide me with hard copies of all studies, BAs and BOs, EAs and EISs, and and all other documents generated by it.

Robert E. Wagenknecht

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"I believe in metal fatigue and the immortality of the bristlecone."

-- Thomas McGuane